January 20, 1823

Today was a very cold day, and we needed to travel at least 10 miles if we were going to reach Fort Osage in time. The terrain is hard and the land is bare; I haven’t seen any animals in about a month. I have two sons and a wife, and they are becoming more and more sick each day. We have three families in our group now, we started with nine, and we have faced some epidemics and some Indian attacks. I worked as a farmer in Missouri, and grew the best crops in the state, until we had a frost which ruined the crops. The crops didn’t grow back, so our family decided to move and take the Santa Fe Trail. We were using horses, until they starved to death, and now we are walking. We have all agreed that we will have to trade some of our possessions to get more food and some supplies for hunting, if we encounter any more animals. Our group decided to stop a little after dark to rest and eat some food before we head out again tomorrow at dawn.

Something extraordinary happened, my son saw a pack of wolves and the other two fathers, Chase and Todd, got their hunting supplies. I ran and got my hunting supplies and hurried off after them. There were eight wolves, but six of them ran away before we could get to them. We chased them through the forest and finally Chase got one, but Todd kept going after the second one. Chase and I called for Todd over and over again, but he never answered. We both assumed he was dead. It was about 9:00pm, Chase I woke up our families and Todd’s family to tell them about the sad news. We all decided that we should eat some of the wolf, knowing that we would need it for the long journey tomorrow. As we were eating, I heard a loud rustling in the forest. I warned everyone to beware, and Chase and I grabbed our hunting supplies. Chase said, “I think we have ourselves a big old grizzly coming our way.” Then right before our eyes it was Todd with three dead wolves. He said, “I’ve been chasing these monsters for hours, I finally caught three of them.” Todd’s family ran towards him leaping and shouting in excitement. I told everyone let’s get some rest; we have a long journey tomorrow. I told myself that we might not make it to Fort Osage in time; we have 8 and half miles to travel in one day. I hope we can make it, I said to myself as I fell asleep on the cold, hard ground.

By: Colt Brown